

The Brethren Evangelist,

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PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Daniel Webster was once asked what was the greatest thought that ever entered his mind. The answer was, "My personal responsibility to God." Great thoughts and ideas entered the mind of this memorable statesman, but his personal responsibility to God exceeded them all. God is our creator and our Father, and as such we sustain certain relations to him. Out of these relations there grow personal duties and responsibilities which all of us must meet. From these none are excused, though the measure of responsibility is determined largely by one's environments and opportunities. To God we are responsible for the use we make of our time and talents. A realization of this truth in all that it means, would lead to a more faithful use of that which God has committed to our care.

It is indeed very difficult to determine the full extent of our responsibility as it is difficult to follow and measure the influence of our words and actions. The words we speak, the deeds we do, who can tell how far out they reach! We live, we move, we have our being in a world, governed by eternal, immutable laws, from which there is no escape. Each one of us, great and small, must meet the solemn realities of life and bear its tremendous responsibilities. The measure of this responsibility is not, as is generally supposed, the measure of our ability to do; not what we are able to do, but what we *might* be able to do. The responsibility for wasted powers and neglected opportunities, we must carry with us to the judgment bar of God. Let us think what we *might be*, and what we *might do*, not what we *are*, and are doing, as the measure of our responsibility. Each one's responsibility is as great as the *possibility of his life*. It is this thought that makes it an awful thing to live. We must make this life with all that it is, and with all that it might have been, and carry it to God who will reward according to its own merits.

Let it be understood that this responsibility is a *personal* matter. You cannot *divide* it. It belongs to *you*, and you alone must bear it. The fact that one hundred persons are responsible for a certain work does not divide that responsibility by 100. Each is responsible for the whole, and unless you have done what you *can* do for its accomplishment, you will go to God with the same responsibility as if then had been but one person to do the whole work. If ten men kill *one* man, each of the ten is guilty of murder, and will suffer the penalty of the law, the same as if there had been but one engaged in the crime. The same principle exactly applies in the performance of our duty. If this truth were fully realized and appreciated, there would be far greater diligence in meeting and discharging our obligations.

CHURCH STATISTICS.

The importance of complete church statistics should not be questioned. The need of such statistics becomes more apparent every day. District conferences, through their secretaries, and pastors everywhere should aid the secretary of our National Conference, in compiling this much needed information. There should be a roll of all organized churches in the Brotherhood with the number of members, also a list of the names of all the ministers, location, etc.

Every year the *New York Independent* publishes full statistical reports of all the various denominations in the United States. Upon examination of these reports, it will be found that they are very incorrectly given, owing to the fact that the correct figures are not available. Let us look at these figures as given by the *Independent* of January 3, 1895. We find ourselves on record as "Dunkards or German Baptists" (Progressives). This is not as it should be, and we have none to blame but ourselves for being thus designated. We are reported as having had 224 ministers in 1890, and 230 in 1894. In 1890 there were 128 organized churches, and in 1894, there are reported 130. Number of members in 1890, are given as 8,089 and in 1894, there are reported 8,100.

What does this table show? That in four years we have gained but six ministers, two churches and *eleven members*. This is eminently unfair. In the first place, the number begins entirely too low at 8,089, being perhaps very little more than one half our actual number. And according to these statistics, we have practically been standing still for the past four years, having gained

but *eleven members*. Making full allowance for death and with-drawals, a gain of eleven members in four years is ridiculous. We have averaged more than that a week during these four years. And this suggests and emphasizes the importance of some method by which we could get correct representation in these leading periodicals. It is to be hoped that something will be done that will enable us to arrive at correct figures. We are but a small body, it is true, but our per cent of growth has been marvelous. A *growing* tree is a healthy tree, and a *growing* church is a prosperous church. *Numbers* are not necessarily an evidence of success, but they are an indication of life and activity in the church.

SMALL THINGS.

Living to Christ in small things, and living for Christ every day, is the secret of large fruitfulness. A peach tree or an orange does not leap into a bounty of fruit by one spasmodic effort: an orchard does not ripen under a single day's sunshine. Every raindrop, every sunbeam, every inch of subsoil does its part. A fruitful Christian is a growth. Every honest prayer that is breathed, every cross that is carried, every trial that is well endured, every good work for our fellow men lovingly done, every little act that is conscientiously performed for Christ's glory, helps to make the Christian character beautiful, and to load its broad boughs with "apples of gold" for God's "baskets of silver."—*The Examiner*.

TAKE TIME FOR THE BIBLE.

As we drift along the swift, relentless current of time toward the end of life; as days and weeks and months and years follow each other in breathless haste, and we reflect now and then for a moment that at any rate for us much of this earthly career has passed irrevocably, what are the interests, thoughts, ay, the books, which really command our attention? What do we read and leave unread? What time do we give to the Bible? No other book, let us be sure of it, can equally avail to prepare us for that which lies before us; for the unknown anxieties and sorrows which are sooner or later the portion of most men and women; for the gradual approach of death; for the period, be it long or short, of waiting and preparation for the throne and face of the eternal Judge. Looking back from the world, how shall we desire to have made the most of our best guide to it? How shall we grudge the hours we have wasted on any—be they thoughts or books or teachers—which only belong to the things of time.—*Canon Liddon*.